

warrior, a hard worker, an Air Force lieutenant colonel, and—perhaps her most important job—a mother of five. Her name is Amanda Naylor, and she has been part of my office for her year-long Defense fellowship.

Amanda took the hustle and bustle of Capitol Hill in stride. She made it look easy. She hit the ground running, and whether it was committee hearings, briefings with Defense Department officials, or working with other offices, Amanda was always there to provide our team expertise and drive issues forward.

She used her own experience in the military and the Air Force to craft legislation like the Rent the Camo Act that provided affordable maternity uniforms for our servicewomen. It is truly a testament to her insight and her hard work that she got this bill into the NDAA, into the defense bill. She is a perfect example of why we need more veterans in Congress and more veterans in government at every level. They bring that on-the-ground expertise into our legislation.

Amanda is talented, smart, and, above all, kind. Congress could certainly use more like her. I am sad she will be leaving us, but she has made our office and she will make the country a better and safer place.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DRIFTNET MODERNIZATION AND BYCATCH REDUCTION ACT

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 906) to improve the management of driftnet fishing.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 906

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION.

Section 3(25) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802(25)) is amended by inserting “, or with a mesh size of 14 inches or greater,” after “more”.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS AND POLICY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 206(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(8) within the exclusive economic zone, large-scale driftnet fishing that deploys nets

with large mesh sizes causes significant entanglement and mortality of living marine resources, including myriad protected species, despite limitations on the lengths of such nets.”.

(b) POLICY.—Section 206(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following—

“(4) prioritize the phase out of large-scale driftnet fishing in the exclusive economic zone and promote the development and adoption of alternative fishing methods and gear types that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources.”.

SEC. 4. TRANSITION PROGRAM.

Section 206 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826) is amended by adding at the end the following—

“(i) FISHING GEAR TRANSITION PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act, the Secretary shall conduct a transition program to facilitate the phase-out of large-scale driftnet fishing and adoption of alternative fishing practices that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources, and shall award grants to eligible permit holders who participate in the program.

“(2) PERMISSIBLE USES.—Any permit holder receiving a grant under paragraph (1) may use such funds only for the purpose of covering—

“(A) any fee originally associated with a permit authorizing participation in a large-scale driftnet fishery, if such permit is surrendered for permanent revocation, and such permit holder relinquishes any claim associated with the permit;

“(B) a forfeiture of fishing gear associated with a permit described in subparagraph (A); or

“(C) the purchase of alternative gear with minimal incidental catch of living marine resources, if the fishery participant is authorized to continue fishing using such alternative gears.

“(3) CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall certify that, with respect to each participant in the program under this subsection, any permit authorizing participation in a large-scale driftnet fishery has been permanently revoked and that no new permits will be issued to authorize such fishing.”.

SEC. 5. EXCEPTION.

Section 307(1)(M) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1857(1)(M)) is amended by inserting before the semicolon the following: “, unless such large-scale driftnet fishing—

“(i) deploys, within the exclusive economic zone, a net with a total length of less than two and one-half kilometers and a mesh size of 14 inches or greater; and

“(ii) is conducted within 5 years of the date of enactment of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act”.

SEC. 6. FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The North Pacific Fishery Management Council may recommend, and the Secretary of Commerce may approve, regulations necessary for the collection of fees from charter vessel operators who guide recreational anglers who harvest Pacific halibut in International Pacific Halibut Commission regulatory areas 2C and 3A as those terms are defined in part 300 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations).

(b) USE OF FEES.—Any fees collected under this section shall be available, without ap-

propriation or fiscal year limitation, for the purposes of—

(1) financing administrative costs of the Recreational Quota Entity program;

(2) the purchase of halibut quota shares in International Pacific Halibut Commission regulatory areas 2C and 3A by the recreational quota entity authorized in part 679 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations);

(3) halibut conservation and research; and

(4) promotion of the halibut resource by the recreational quota entity authorized in part 679 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN)?

There was no objection.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to speak in favor of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. This was sent to us by the Senate on voice vote and sponsored by California Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN.

I applaud our colleagues in the Senate for sending us meaningful bipartisan bills—for a change—that were overwhelmingly improved. I hope my colleagues in the House will join me in this bipartisan effort to conserve our oceans and wildlife.

I would also like to applaud the recreational fishing and conservation community for their leadership on this bill.

Large-scale drift gillnets—or driftnets, as they are called—are wasteful, and they are an outdated type of fishing gear. At 2 kilometers long, their purpose is to simply drift along whatever ocean currents and catch whatever they may find in their long webbing.

The only large-scale driftnet fishery in the country today is the West Coast swordfish fishery, where these driftnets are used to catch swordfish and other commercially valuable species such as thresher, mako shark, and opah.

But a 2-kilometer-long net in the ocean catches far more than these target species. Driftnets are indiscriminate. They catch sea turtles, bottlenose dolphins, and short-finned pilot whales.

During the committee hearing on this bill, my Republican colleague, GARRET GRAVES, joked that California is finally catching up with his State of Louisiana because they ended driftnet fishing in 1995, to which I say: Good for Louisiana. Elsewhere around the world,

driftnets have been banned due to the high rate of bycatch.

This important legislation would amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to direct the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a transition program to phase out the use of these large-scale driftnets and to facilitate the adoption of alternative fishing gear.

This transition program is supported by key stakeholders. A majority of active permit holders submitted their intent to participate in the program, and a nonprofit has invested \$1 million to help these fishermen transition.

It is important to note that there really are great alternatives to drift gillnets, like deep-set buoys, which have a lower bycatch rate and can actually fetch higher market rates for fishermen.

This bill would also prohibit the use of large-scale driftnet fishing by all U.S. vessels within the U.S. exclusive economic zone within 5 years.

Let's join the rest of the world and end the use of drift gillnets. The Senate passed this bill in July, and I urge my colleagues in the House to do the same now.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us today a bill that will very effectively put most swordfish boats on the West Coast out of business. I believe it is yet another battle on a multifront war by the far-left Democrats against America's working class.

The swordfish boats on the West Coast harvest a Pacific fishery that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has classified as "underutilized." There is no shortage of swordfish thanks to the responsible management of this fishery under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The principal means of harvesting swordfish is the drift gillnet, which has been a target of environmental extremists for years. Despite their lurid tales of indiscriminate catches of other species, particularly endangered species, this is, in fact, a very rare occurrence.

With respect to endangered species, the National Marine Fisheries Service reported: "It is NMFS' biological opinion that the proposed action of continued management of the drift gillnet fishery is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these seven endangered species and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify any ESA-listed designated critical habitat."

So here we have an industry that some of the hardest working men and women in America depend upon to feed their families—and, by the way, feed ours, as well—in an underutilized fishery by means of drift gillnets that have an extremely low incidence of inadvertent bycatch.

So what does Congress propose to do for these families? Commend them for

their hard work? Thank them for the contribution they make to America's food supply and to the American economy? Well, no, not exactly. Instead, Congress proposes to shut them down.

Those aren't my words. When Gary Burke, one of the swordfishermen threatened by this bill came before our subcommittee, he said: "I want to be very clear regarding the impacts of this legislation on the driftnet gill fleet. It will shut us down."

And for what possible reason?

The fishery is sound; the industry is responsible; incidental takes are extremely rare. Why would anyone want to decimate these families and American consumers as well? Just for the hell of it seems to be the only logical explanation.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act has been lauded by conservationists for many decades. It has stood the test of time and proven itself to be a program that works.

The Regional Fishery Management Council process works because it is collaborative, and it involves the parties with a direct stake in keeping the fishery healthy.

This legislation is a ham-handed, iron-fisted, top-down diktat that goes against everything that Magnuson-Stevens stands for.

Now, we just heard: Don't worry. There is an alternative that will work just fine. It is the deep-set buoy gear.

And, yes, it is sometimes used to supplement the drift gillnets, but it is not economically viable by itself.

As the actual swordfishermen explained, the costs of running a fishing vessel—fuel, debt service, and labor—often means a very tight profit margin. To make a trip viable, the boat must achieve enough of a catch to at least offset its costs.

The alternative this bill would force on them simply doesn't catch nearly as many fish and certainly not enough to make the trip profitable. Reduce the catch below the break-even mark—as this bill surely does—and there is no catch because the boat can't go out.

How do we know that? Because the very fishermen who use the deep-set buoy gear have told us so. They state in a letter to the committee: "Our concern is based on the fact that while there is potential for alternative gear to be used in this industry, currently there is no existing gear that can be substituted for the drift gillnet and still allow fishermen to earn a living."

Those are the people who use that equipment.

So let me repeat that: Our fishermen will not be able to earn a living using this experimental gear. The majority knows this; it is just they don't care.

This legislation does nothing to improve fisheries management but, instead, does great harm in two respects: It takes away the earnings of American fishermen, and it raises the price of seafood for American families.

Again, don't take my word for it, or even the fishermen whose livelihoods

are being cast aside. The Natural Resources Committee received testimony from NOAA which stressed to our members that this bill "does not reflect the progress made to date in minimizing bycatch in the U.S. West Coast drift gillnet fishery. Based on the best available science and 26 years of observer data, bycatch of threatened or endangered protected species is a rare event."

Now let's talk about the unintended consequences of putting the American West Coast swordfish industry out of business.

It doesn't protect the fishery because the fishery isn't endangered. It doesn't protect other species because incidental taking of those species is rare.

The ultimate irony is that this bill doesn't even stop the use of drift gillnets except, of course, for Americans. This bill will effectively remove West Coast swordfish from the market, but it doesn't remove the market demand.

So what happens? Consumer prices will go up and the market will meet that demand by shifting to swordfish caught by foreign fleets where they are not strictly regulated and where they will enjoy an enormous competitive advantage by being unrestricted in their use of the very same drift gillnets that Americans—and only Americans—are forbidden from using.

Again, that is not my conclusion. That is the conclusion of NOAA itself, which told our committee: "NOAA is concerned that shifting to alternative gears that are not economically viable could decrease U.S. swordfish harvest and reduce the U.S. West Coast large mesh drift gillnet fishery's competitiveness against foreign fisheries with less restrictive environmental regulations during the phaseout."

Mr. Speaker, I urge rejection of this cruel and ill-conceived measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, for those folks who had the word "diktat" on their bingo card, you are a big winner today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that, but when he describes this bill as extreme, overreaching, and draconian, he left out the fact that 28 of the 31 fishermen in this particular fishery have already agreed to participate in the transition program that this bill provides. My hope is that the three holdouts will take advantage of the transition assistance being offered and join the rest of their peers.

Also, when my colleague mentions far-left Democrats driving this bill, he forgets to mention the long list of Republicans in both the House and Senate who are supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of the State with one of the largest exclusive economic zones in our country and as the Representative of the State that sits in the middle of the Pacific where we are seeing increasing

overfishing, including the use of these techniques throughout our Pacific, I rise in very strong support of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. This bipartisan legislation is necessary to transition fairly an important West Coast fishery away from the use of large mesh driftnets.

I want to commend, in addition to Senator FEINSTEIN and the Republican cosponsors, Congressman LIEU on our side for his work on the bill in the House.

Yes, this fishery is small, with less than 20 participants, but it is one of the most destructive. The use of mile-long driftnets results in over 70 species caught in volume as bycatch.

The problems with this practice are nothing new. Beginning in the 1980s, Congress and the Republican and first Bush administration recognized its destruction and worked together to reform the practice, culminating with the near complete global moratorium on the practice.

Today, the large mesh driftnets that continue to be used in Federal waters along the West Coast are the last of their kind in the Nation. This bill closes that loophole and phases out the practice.

□ 0930

Fortunately, new fishing technology has been developed that catches swordfish at a profitable level without the huge levels of bycatch associated with driftnets. That is good for fishermen, good for consumers, and good for the marine environment.

All West Coast States have already acted to prohibit this type of fishing from their shores and their oceans. It is time we, at the Federal level, act to do the same to ensure the sustainability of this fishery and the sustainability of the bycatch fisheries. Transitioning away from large-mesh driftnets is supported by recreational fishermen, conservation groups, seafood purveyors, and consumers, and it just makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bipartisan, bicameral bill.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the California fishermen who participated in the experimental technology demonstration project expressing their concerns with the bill.

MAY 6, 2019.

Re: H.R. 1979—Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act

Hon. TED LIEU,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN LIEU: We are participants in the experimental Deep-Set Buoy Gear ("DSBG") fishery off the California Coast. A majority of us participate in, or have participated in, the drift gillnet fishery. We are writing to express our concerns regarding H.R. 1979, the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. H.R. 1979 includes language which will phase-out the use of drift gillnets ("DGN") to harvest

swordfish and require the "... adoption of alternative fishing practices that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources". Our concern is based on the fact that while there is potential for alternative gear to be used in this fishery, currently there is no existing gear that can be substituted for the DGN gear and still allow fishermen to earn a living.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council ("PFMC") is currently working towards authorizing Deep-Set Buoy Gear ("DSBG"), a swordfish gear type that was developed to provide west coast fishers with an additional gear option for use during periods of reduced landings. DSBG has been allowed to operate under an Exempted Fishing Permit ("EFP") since 2015. As noted in the initial EFP application DSBG was designed to "... provide fishers with a complementary gear type that can be used in conjunction with harpooning ... and also compliment ongoing DGN activities."

Participants in the initial EFP had extensive experience targeting swordfish with DGN and harpoon gears and participated in the research trials so that they could expand domestic fishery options for the West Coast. This continues to be a priority for managers and the fishing community, as current restrictions limit summertime harvest off California waters, forcing markets to import swordfish even when the resource is available in local waters. The coupling of DSBG, harpoon and DGN techniques provides the tools needed to capitalize on this federal resource throughout the entire fishery season. This is critical given that different gear types have different seasons in which they work optimally.

Because DSBG landings peak in the months prior to that of the DGN fishery, our community has largely supported the advent and trial of new techniques, as they have the potential to augment and revitalize our declining fishery. Now that H.R. 1979 proposes to phase out DGN and replace it with DSBG, we are concerned that this will further impact the viability of west coast swordfish operations all together. We are certain that the DGN market share will be filled with additional unregulated foreign-caught swordfish. As shown in 2018, increases in unregulated imports drives market price down, reduces domestic profitability and deters participation our US fisheries. Collectively, we feel that H.R. 1979 will negatively impact local livelihoods, increase our reliance upon foreign fleets and decrease the productivity and of our west coast fishery.

We are also concerned over the proposed transition of the traditional DGN fleet to a future DSBG fishery. Some of the DGN vessels are larger than those currently used in the DSBG fishery and many of them only fish for swordfish during the fall window in which DGN works optimally. We are troubled that the proposed transition will create an inequity among the fleet and negatively impact fishing operations and profitability. We feel that H.R. 1979 is premature and should be contemplated only after it is demonstrated that DSBG can be profitable for the entire DGN community. Until then, we hope to continue to provide domestic west coast swordfish caught using highly regulated techniques that continue to operate in full federal and state compliance.

Sincerely,

Chugey Sepulveda, PhD, EFP Lead,
Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research, Oceanside, CA; Donald Krebs, F/V Goldcoast, San Diego, CA; Ben Stephens, F/V Tres Mujeres, Vista, CA; Freddie Hepp, F/V Plumeria, Santa Barbara, CA; William Sutton, F/V Aurelia, Ojai, CA; Nathan Perez, F/V Bear Flag II, Newport Beach, CA; Jack

Stephens, F/V DEA, Vista, CA; Kelly Fukushima, F/V Three Boys, San Diego, CA.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I implore the majority to consider the damage that it will do with this bill. The West Coast swordfish fishery is healthy and, indeed, underutilized. The drift gillnet results in very little incidental take of other species. To put a number on it, in 17 years, only 10 whales interacted with these nets, and 4 of them were released alive. Six of them were killed.

Now, to put that in perspective—6 in 17 years—roughly 80 whales are killed by ships off the California coast every year. Six were killed by driftnets in 17 years; 80 are killed by ship collisions every year.

Does my friend see the difference?

Banning the nets will reduce the catch below the level that is economically viable. It will shut down the industry. The result will be devastating to the families that run these businesses. It will be harmful to the consumer who will pay higher prices for this product, and it will encourage increased use of driftnets in foreign waters to fill the shortage caused by banning them in our own.

Why in God's name would anyone want to do that?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has raised the issue of foreign fleets using these drift gillnets a couple of times now. Let me briefly speak to that, and I will close.

Of course, we need to do something about those bad practices by foreign fleets, but in order to do that, in order to restrict the importation of seafood that is caught through unsustainable practices by foreign fleets, we have to hold our own fleets to this higher standard of sustainability and bycatch reduction. That is what this bill and other efforts in this area are all about.

Mr. Speaker, this is a solidly bipartisan bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act, bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would phase out the use of large mesh drift gillnets off the coast of California.

Currently, the use of gillnets with a total length of two and one-half kilometers or more is prohibited in U.S. waters. However, off the coast of California, we have seen that drift gillnet fishing gear within the legal federal limit is still having an adverse impact on our Pacific wildlife. While these mile-long gillnets are designed to catch swordfish and thresher sharks, the large mesh net frequently captures many other marine animals as bycatch, injuring or killing them in the process.

The practice of drift gillnet fishing is an antiquated method for catching swordfish and

thresher sharks, and is already banned in many states, including Washington and Oregon. It is time to adopt new fishing technology in order to set a path toward more sustainable fishing. This bill would direct the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a transition program to phase-out large mesh drift gillnet and promote the adoption of alternative fishing practices to minimize the bycatch of marine species.

Bycatch is a lingering problem in fisheries management, and such waste is especially pervasive in driftnet fisheries. We have the prime opportunity today to provide a solution that would improve fishery resource management and provide the swordfish fishery participants the needed support to transition to more selective and sustainable fishing gear. It is a win-win situation.

On July 22, 2020, the Senate passed S. 906 by unanimous consent. There is broad support for this legislation, including endorsements from the American Sportfishing Association, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Humane Society Legislative Fund, Oceana, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and the National Marine Manufacturers Association. In the spirit of bipartisanship, I urge my colleagues in the House to join us in passing this commonsense legislation today. I would like to thank Chairman GRIJALVA, Congressman HUFFMAN, and Senator FEINSTEIN for their leadership on this issue as well as House and Senate committee staff for their hard work. I look forward to the enactment of this bill.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 906, the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. I would like to start out by thanking Senators LISA MURKOWSKI, DAN SULLIVAN, DIANNE FEINSTEIN, and SHELLEY CAPITO, along with Congressman TED LIEU, and everyone who was involved in this legislation. Their passion for our fisheries is truly admirable.

This bill includes a Recreational Quota Entitlement (RQE) provision that is crucial to the charter fishing industry. Under the provision, an RQE would be allowed to purchase and hold a limited amount of halibut quota shares to augment the amount of halibut available to charters. For years, charter anglers have faced stringent restrictions as catch limits have been reduced and this provision would allow fishing charters to compete on a larger scale.

Charter fishing in Alaska is world renowned and is a driving force for tourism in many towns. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to spend a day in Seward this past summer meeting with halibut charters and hearing directly from the people in the industry. I'd also note we had a great time catching some Alaska fish.

While this bill may not be perfect, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation because of the importance of the RQE provision to my home state of Alaska. This is a self-funding solution that will have a positive impact for the charter fishing industry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 906.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ROBERT E. LEE STATUE REMOVAL ACT

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 970) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to develop a plan for the removal of the monument to Robert E. Lee at the Antietam National Battlefield, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 970

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Robert E. Lee Statue Removal Act".

SEC. 2. REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF MONUMENT.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service, shall remove and appropriately dispose of the Monument to General Robert E. Lee at the Antietam National Battlefield.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the matter under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 970 introduced by my friend, Representative BROWN of Maryland, a member of the Committee on Natural Resources and vice chair of the House Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. BROWN's bill directs the National Park Service to remove a statue of Robert E. Lee from the Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland. This 24-foot statue of General Lee was dedicated in 2003, 138 years after the end of the Civil War. It was commissioned and placed by a private citizen on private land that the National Park Service later acquired in 2005.

As our Nation continues to wrestle and reckon with racial inequality and injustice, it is past time that we take stock of these symbols that we display and the stories that we tell about our past, present, and future.

For example, the statue at issue here is not historically accurate and it simply serves to glorify the "Lost Cause" narrative. It does not belong on a national battlefield.

I thank Representative BROWN for his hard work in bringing attention to this issue, and I urge swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to fill in for the ranking member of the full committee, Representative BISHOP. He was here briefly earlier, but he is definitely under the weather.

Mr. Speaker, on this bill, I simply yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, my good friend, Mr. HUFFMAN, for yielding time. I also thank Chairman GRIJALVA and the staff on the Committee on Natural Resources for their work and partnership on H.R. 970, the Robert E. Lee Statue Removal Act.

Mr. Speaker, my bill, which I first introduced last Congress, would remove the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee from Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland. Antietam was the site of immense bloodshed during the Civil War.

After 12 hours of combat, 23,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing. It remains the bloodiest day in American history, and thousands come every year to learn about the war over slavery that almost divided our Union.

On this Federal land stands a 24-foot statue of General Lee. It was commissioned with the explicit intent of honoring the Confederacy and glorifies the Confederacy, its leaders, the cause of slavery, and open rebellion against the United States of America.

The Lee statue was built by a private citizen in 2003—as you heard, 138 years after the end of the Civil War—and later acquired by the National Park Service. It is also historically inaccurate.

The monument depicts General Lee riding to the battlefield on horseback, but the evidence shows the General actually traveled to a different part of a battlefield in an ambulance due to a broken wrist.

The monument claims that Lee was "personally against secession and slavery." Yet Lee was a brutal slave owner. He fought for the Confederacy and defended the savage institution of slavery, and he led an army that kidnapped free African Americans and massacred surrendering Black Union soldiers.

Instead of teaching us the dark lessons of our history, this statue sanitizes the actions of men who fought a war to keep Black Americans in chains. This is just one monument, among many.

Throughout our history, monuments to the Confederacy have been used to